is to ensure availability of affordable and effective communications for the citizens. It also contemplates to make available telephone on demand by the year, 2002.

The fixation and regulation of tarrif is a function of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). For this purpose, TRAI issues telecom Tariff Order (TTO) from time to time. The Telecommunication Tariff Order (TTO) 1999 as notified by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) recognizes that social objectives of Telecommunication policy are important particularly in relation to those sections of the society for whom afordability is the most important issue. Thus, the TTO has specified monthly rentals, which are different for rural and urban subscribers. Monthly rentals specified in TTO, 1999 have been purposely kept below cost for rural and small sized exchanges so that basic telephone services are largely affordable. Presently, Government have no proposal to increase the number of free calls and reduce the rental charges.

Upgradation of PCO centres

*378. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the All India PCO franchisees Association has appealed to Government to upgrade PCO centres to Multiple Internet Services Centres' generate revenue for PCOs; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to accede to this request?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir. Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) has been requested by the All India PCO Franchisee Association through a consortium of 13 companies for upgrading PCO centres to Multiple Internet Service Centres. No such request from the Association has been received by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL).

(b) MTNL has conveyed 'No Objection', in principle, to the request of the Association for voluntary phased upgradation of PCO

booths to Internet enabled multi-functional Kiosks subject to suitability of commercial, technical and other details.

Nepalese Prime Minister's visit to India

*379. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the discussions that took place with the Nepalese Prime Minister during his recent five days official visit to India;

(b) whether issues like increasing security on the border, removing trade barriers recently imposed by India, were discussed;

(c) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (d) His excellency Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba, Prime Minister of Nepal, paid an official good will visit to India from March 20-25, 2002 at the invitation of the Prime Minister of India. During the visit, PM Deuba called on the President and Vice President and held talks with the Prime Minister. The Home Minister, External Affairs Minister, Defence Minister, Commerce and Industries Minister, Human Resource Development Minister and Water Resource Minister called on the Nepalese Prime Minister. PM Deuba attended a business meeting organised jointly by the Confederation of Indian Industry and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries. He also visited Kolkata where he met the Governor and Chief Minister of West Bengal. The discussions were friendly and cordial, in keeping with the close relations between India and Nepal.

2. The discussions held during PM Deuba's visit focused on issues relating to terrorism and bilateral trade and economic cooperation. Both Prime Minister reiterated the determination of the two countries to work closely in fighting the scourge of terrorism which was adversely affecting peace and stability in the region as also impeding socio-economic development. The Prime Ministers renewed the commitment of the two countries not to allow their respective territories to be used for activities inimical to the interest of the